601 Fire 6 (19 to 22). --The chief, or rather, it seems, the shaman of
621 group c, is 30 to 40 years old, "brother" of c23. His dispositions are
[754] friendly and mysterious. We shall encounter him farther on (2). He

2. P. 103.

has two wives, c19 and [54] c21, very pretty girls of 17 or 18 years, "sisters" of the dead husband of c23. Here we have, then, a good example of sororal polygyny. The second woman has a little boy of 3 years, C22.

Fire 7 (23 to 25). --The woman, c23, is over 40; she is a widow and seems to enjoy great consideration. Her numerous "brothers" provide for her as well as her children, and like C20, she is apt to receive supernatural revelations (1). She has a son, C25, about 14

1. Cf. p. 101.

years old, and a daughter, c24, about 10. Concerning them, refer to page 34.

Fire 8 (26 and 27). --A young couple of about 18, whose parents must be dead and whom the elders of the group call "grandchildren."

Fire 9 (28 to 30). --C28, about 25 years, is a "son" of C6; his wife, c29 is older than he (over 40); she is called "daughter" by c19 and c21, although they are by far younger than she; her daughter c30 is about 2 years old.

Fire 10 (31 to 33). --c32, about 40 years old, is a younger sister of c23; she has two daughters: the eldest, c31, about 17, is married; the younger, c33, still a baby. The husband and her son-in-law are absent; they are said to be on a trip together. The group sees to the needs of the two women.

It is suitable to add a visitor to this list, C34, about 30 years old.
[574] He is the brother of c12 and, during his stay, he receives the hospitality of household number 4.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS

Husbands and Wives

593 To understand well the attitude of the two sexes as concerns one another, it is indispensable to keep in mind the fundamental character

collectively obliged to make reprisals for an injury done one of its members. Much more often, given the very lively and permanent animosity which reigns between the groups, these pretexts good for exciting the spirit are voluntarily entertained, especially if they feel strong either because of the importance of the group's strength or because of an alliance with neighboring bands against a common enemy, concluded by the intermediary of messengers acting as ambassadors. The proposition of war is presented by an exalted individual or one who exposes before his companions his particular griefs, in the same tone and style that speeches were made at the encounter.

39. ẽ̃ akinãẽ̃ ẑednãẽ̃ gõdegãẽ̃ kakonẑẽ̃ ordnẑẽ̃ yalaŋ̂ẽnẑẽ̃.(b1) whose approximate sense is: "Hello! Come here! Let's go! I am irritated! very irritated! arrows! big arrows!" The Indians become so excited upon the occasion of these epic speeches that it is not possible to obtain the commentary of the formula except well after they have been cited and undoubtedly very unfaithfully. But war is not a matter of purely profane decision. It necessitates a preliminary ceremony which will determine if the signs are favorable or not. Dressed in special attire, tufts of buriti straw dappled with red, hoods of jaguar skin, the men assemble under the leadership of the chief and execute the special dance and chant of war. (1) A divining rite

1. Dances and music will be the object of a special publication.

is then performed. The chief, or the sorcerer in the groups where he exists, goes solemnly to hide an arrow in a corner of the bush. The arrow is retrieved the next day. If it is covered with blood, the expedition is undertaken, if not, it is given up. (2) Many warlike

2. This symbolic use of an arrow seems typical of cultures situated north of the Amazon. The fact is interesting, given the northern affinities of the Nambikwara language. Concerning the use of the arrow as the message of war, cf. Roth, "An inquiry," etc., Annual report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 30, p. 362; Koch-Grünberg, Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern, etc., Berlin, 1910, Vol. II, p. 316; Gumilla, Historia Natural del Rio Orinoco, Barcelona, 1791, Vol. I, p. 134.

expeditions thus begun and after several kilometers of marching,

787 These visions are attributed to the thunder which sends them to men under its semi-personal form amõ.

771 Thus the Nambikwara conceive of three types of supernatural
756 forces: first the power which is abstract, but placed in objects or substances, the inate, next the spirits acting in the form of super-natural or seminatural animals, atasu or jaguar. Finally the thunder, with which under certain conditions, it is possible to entertain personal relations. Each individual can, in a certain measure, establish contact with these forces, however it is the shamans who have the specialized function of intermediary between the human group and the supernatural world. The information which we shall give on this point will be very summary, for it was impossible to obtain from our informants a coherent treatment of the question of shamanism. None of the groups encountered had a shaman with the exception of a single one (group c) where the powers of the chief and the sorcerer were found [102] concentrated in a single individual (C20). Our best informant, B1, chief of the allied group, was categorical concerning the fact that C20 combined the two qualities of uelikabala (chief, c) and of ndare (thunder, c) although he was only uilikãde, temporal chief. The sorcerer would then be simultaneously the man who identifies himself with thunder, and who communicates with it in the personal form called amõ. Likewise, in the eastern groups (a1 restricted and enlarged, and a2), it was not possible to uncover the presence of a sorcerer or of an individual with such powers. This fact could be interpreted in three different ways: that the sorcerers were held apart; or that they dissimulated their nature; that the institution of the sorcerer is, in fact, absent in certain groups; or that, in these same groups, the functions of the sorcerer are exercised by the chief, and that, in inverse fashion to what is produced in group c, it is the spiritual functions which are in second place with regard to the temporal. It is this hypothesis which we consider the most reasonable. In group a1; A1 makes the arrow poison and treats sick persons by suction, functions which in group c come within the province of C20 considered as shaman, rather than chief of the group.

756 Whatever the fact may be, and as we have just said, it is the sorcerer who makes the poisons, and it is he who proceeds to the magical treatment of the sick, clearly different from the positive
278 therapeutics likewise practiced. The Nambikwara are familiar with
757 quite a large number of medicinal plants and treat certain illnesses with their help. Thus they care for purulent ophthalmia by an

injection of pao preto (ikatu n̂erə̂m, a1), put in the eye with the aid of a funnel of leaves from whose lower extremity the liquid falls drop by drop. But other maladies, considered the result of poisoning (or of a charm; in both cases: nãnde) are exclusively within the domain of the sorcerer. He makes the "arrows of thunder" (ndadrede, b1) in all points similar to those used for hunting except that their dimensions are much more restricted. The treatment consists of three operations: throwing the arrows around the sick person to carry away the spirits; sucking the body to force out the cause of the illness; this cause is thrown far away when it has been captured:

43. ãdige underãdige kadirjenka ungerajge tenundige (b1)
throw, throw far away the little thorns sucked with the mouth, throw away [the evil]. (1)

1. The informant made it known that by "little thorns" he meant to designate the "arrows of thunder" which are only several centimeters in length. One notes the same assimilation in other regions of South America. Thus, the informant of Karsten in the Chaco (R. Karsten, "Indian tribes of the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco," Societas Scientiarum Fennicae, Commentationes Humanorum Litterarum, IV, 1, p. 132-133) cites as the cause of the malady and the way of combatting it, an "arrow" or "splinter").

[103] Afterwards the sick person is usually cured and can take up his work again:

44. enendige deendige enena dednige (b1)
To be sick is finished [one can] continue.

However, the sorcerer can establish much closer relationships with the supernatural powers. During our stay in his group, C20 disappeared, or more exactly did not return to camp at the usual hour. The other men, having gone hunting, had not seen him the whole day. Night fell and toward nine or ten o'clock in the evening, the most profound consternation reigned in the camp and particularly around the fire of the man who had disappeared, whose two wives and child held themselves embraced while mourning in advance the death of their husband and father. At this moment we decided to look around, accompanied by a few Indians. We had only to walk 200 meters to discover C20, crouched on the ground and shivering in the darkness. He was completely naked, that is, divested of his

He was completely naked, that is, divested of his
756 necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and belt, and by the light of our
[301] electric lamps we could make out his tragic expression and his pale complexion. He let himself be helped to the camp without difficulty, where he sat down without a word and in a completely impressive attitude of dejection. Little by little, his story was drawn from him by an anxious listener. He explained that he had been carried off by the thunder (amõ). [a storm had broken the same day]; the thunder had carried him in the air to a point which he designated at a distance of 25 kilometers from the camp (Ananáz River), had divested him of all his ornaments, then brought him back the same way and left him in the place where we had discovered him exhausted. Everyone went to sleep commenting on the incident and the next morning, C20 had recovered not only his habitual good humor, but also all his ornaments, which amazed no one and for which he offered no explanation. But the following days a very different version of the event began to be peddled by the Tarundé. They said that, far from having entered into relationship with the other world, C20, under the cover of a magical disappearance, had gone to undertake
[578] some transactions with a band of Sabané Indians who were camping in the vicinity. These insinuations were never developed further, and the official version of the affair continued to be ostensibly admitted. However, in our personal relationships, B1 let his preoccupations be seen upon several occasions. As the two groups left us shortly after, we never found out the outcome of the story.

756 No information has been uncovered concerning the manner of
278 naming the shaman as such. In the preparation of the arrow poison, C20 was assisted by his potential son-in-law C25.

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622 [104] Besides his supernatural attributes, the chief, or shaman,
756 plays another role, that of "leader" in ceremonies and celebrations.
796 The Nambikwara have three types of ceremonies. Those which mark the critical moments of each one's existence, such as birth, initiation, puberty, marriage, death; the seasonal festivals; and finally, the ceremonies celebrated on exceptional occasions: war and hunting or scavenging expeditions. We have already alluded to the rites of war, and we shall speak farther on of the ceremonies of the first type. We shall limit ourselves here then to some brief observations concerning the others.

[End Plate VII]

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Family life: The woman a22 and her baby a23 in a state of ease (cf. p. 106 ff.).

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593
301
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The shaman of group c (C20) plays with one of his two wives (c21).

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

particular form of their own. Death is identified with these spirits. Men's souls are believed to be reincarnated as jaguars, whereas women's and children's souls are taken away by wind and thunder, never to return.

The highest being is the Thunder, with which any man, though usually a shaman, may have personal contact through revelations and visions. Women, however, except when very old, and children are deprived of these privileges. Women are also forbidden, under pain of death, to see the sacred flageolets (see Musical Instruments, p. 368) played at the ceremonies marking the beginning and the end of the dry season.

SHAMANISM AND MEDICINE

The shaman is sometimes distinct from—but more frequently identified with—the political chief. He is distinguished by having the privilege of polygyny, playing the leading role in ceremonial life, and possessing special supernatural powers. He treats patients by sucking out the disease or by fighting it with small ritual arrows called "thunder-arrows."

In addition to magical cures, the *Nambicuara* treat sickness with numerous medicinal plants, which are used externally or internally according to the disease. For eye infection, which is very frequent, they apply the infusion of a special bark with the help of a container made of leaves.

FOLKLORE, LORE, AND LEARNING

The only legend recorded by Lévi-Strauss (n.d. b) is a flood tale relating the destruction of human life and its re-creation through several incestuous marriages between the offspring of an old woman, who was the only being who escaped the disaster.

The only basic numbers used for counting are one and two, but the natives can reckon higher figures by combining these.

Colors are classified differently according to the dialects. The *Eastern, Central, Southern,* and *Western Nambicuara* agree in putting yellow and green in the same category, whereas the *Northern* group identify red and yellow, and class green, blue, and black together.

Some *Nambicuara* groups call stars by the same name which designates the spirits. The year is divided into two seasons and an undetermined number of lunar months. The day includes six main stages, each based on the position of the sun. Space is divided into two sections that are perpendicular to each other, one corresponding to the apparent movement of the sun and the other to the direction of the main waterways.

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3: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

of skill and initiative are the prerequisites of a good leader. It is he who makes the arrow-poison, although the preparation of *curare* among the Nambikuara is a purely profane activity surrounded by no ceremonial taboos or magic prescriptions. It is he, also, who makes the rubber ball used in the head-ball games which are played occasionally. The chief must be a good singer and dancer, a merrymaker always ready to cheer up the band and to brighten the dullness of daily life. This could easily lead to shamanism; and, in some cases, I have met with chiefs who were at the same time healers and trance addicts. Mystical life, however, is kept in the background among the Nambikuara, and, wherever they exist, magical functions are only secondary attributes of the leader. More often chieftainship and sorcery are divided between two different individuals. In this respect, there is a strong difference between the Nambikuara and their northwestern neighbors the Tupi-Kawahib among whom the chief is, first of all, a shaman, usually a psychotic addicted to dreams, visions, trances and impersonations.

But although they are oriented in a more positive direction, the Nambikuara chief's skill and ingenuity are none the less amazing. He must have a perfect knowledge of the territories haunted by his and other groups, be familiar with the hunting grounds, the location of fruit-bearing trees and the time of their ripening, have some idea of the itineraries followed by other bands, whether hostile or friendly. Therefore, he must travel more, and more quickly, than his people, have a good memory, and sometimes gamble his prestige on hazardous contacts with foreign and dangerous people. He is constantly engaged in some task of reconnoitering and exploring, and seems to flutter around his band rather than lead it.

Except for one or two men without actual power, but eager to cooperate and to receive occasional rewards, the passivity of the band makes a strong contrast with its dynamic leader. It seems as if the band, having relinquished certain advantages to the chief, were in exchange relying entirely upon him for its interests and safety. I received a particularly striking demonstration of this under rather strange circumstances. After several weeks' discussion, I had obtained from a chief the favor of taking me, together with a few companions and some animals loaded with presents, to the semi-permanent dwellings of his band which were uninhabited at that time. This was a chance for me to penetrate more deeply into the unexplored Nambikuara territory

4: Oberg E-5 (1949)1953
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

ORNAMENTATION

301 The Eastern Nambicuara also make a wide assortment of ornaments from tucum nuts, shell,
306 teeth, and bamboo. From the shell of the tucum nut they make black washers which are strung for necklaces or ear ornaments. The irregular-shaped washers are first ground down to an almost paper-like thinness on a piece of sandstone. They are then strung tightly on a string and the maker begins to rub them against a stone in order to make them circular. He continues rubbing until the washers are no more than a quarter of an inch in diameter, for the smaller the washer the more highly the necklace is valued, as this process takes many weeks.

301 The ear lobes of both men and women are per-
304 forated so that tucum shell washers, beads on a string, and triangular pieces of shell can be suspended from them.

The septum of the nose and the upper lips of men are perforated. Through the hole in the septum they force a slender piece of bamboo about 2 inches in length. These adornments give a peculiar expression to the face, particularly when the man is speaking. Julio was especially proud of these ornaments and claimed that white men were just like women because they did not wear them. On special occasions a blue macaw feather [292] [756] about 10 inches long with a bunch of red feathers near the lower end is worn in the nose. Only shamans wear a hat made from jaguar skin.

301 The most popular necklace is made from tucum washers and is worn by men, women, and children. Short lengths of bamboo, monkey teeth, jaguar teeth and claws are also used for making necklaces for men. If very long, any necklace can be worn over one shoulder and under the arm. A special type of necklace for men is made by suspending black mutúm feathers from a string alternating with lengths of bamboo. Generally the feathers also alternate, some being long and some short. A rare but highly valued necklace is made from the shiny black horns of a large beetle.

Arm bands about an inch in width made of woven cotton are worn above the biceps by both men and women. From these, men suspend tassels of buriti fiber. This fiber is also worn around the wrists and ankles. Wrist bands are also made for women from the tail of the armadillo.

[p. 95(B)]

776 [753] *Tauptú* does not cause illness, but when people get sick he begins to eat away the flesh and finally kills them and eventually takes their bones to his abode in the sky. The missionaries told me that when the first airplane appeared in Nambicuara territory the Indians ran into the forest and hid because they believed the airplane was *tauptú*. Shamans sometimes visit the land of *tauptú* by riding up to the sky on the back of [756] *urutai*, the night hawk or goat sucker. Julio claimed that his father-in-law, who was a powerful shaman, had visited the realm of *tauptú* while in a trance.

776 756 The Wakítisu fear most of all the spirit armadillo called *ulurú*. When someone sees bits of manioc cake and charcoal floating on the river near the village, he comes back and tells the shaman, who then goes to examine the signs. If the shaman decides that it is *ulurú*, immediate action must be taken to save the world from destruction. The women and children shut themselves in their huts while the men take their wooden sword clubs (*hulúkisu*) and go to the bank of the river. The shaman then digs a deep hole in the bank, into which he is lowered with a rope. When he has grasped *ulurú* by the tail he signals the men on the surface to pull him out. The shaman remains at the mouth of the hole with his arm thrust in, holding *ulurú* by the tail while with his other hand he marks points on the ground which are directly over the head, heart, and stomach of *ulurú*. One by one the men thrust their sword clubs into the ground at the places marked by the shaman. As they push the blades in they twist them to make sure that they kill *ulurú*. After the spirit armadillo has been killed, the men go back to the village leaving the shaman alone with the dead *ulurú*. The shaman then cuts up the spirit armadillo, washes the pieces in the river, and begins to sing. When the ghosts of the dead Nambicuara hear the song they come and eat the pieces prepared by the shaman, after which they go away happy because the Nambicuara have been saved.

776 [821] The Wakítisu say that if they should ever fail to kill *ulurú*, a terrific storm would appear followed by an earthquake, for when *ulurú* gets under the village he will turn the world upside down, *tauptú* will fall down from the sky, and the Nambicuara will be buried again. In short, they will go back

[p. 100 (A)]

776 under the ground from where *oklihdítisu*, the culture hero, once released them. They add that they expect this to happen some day.

●756 The man who is responsible for guarding the
775 band against evil spirits is the shaman (*wanîngidisu*). In this task he is assisted by the ghosts of dead shamans of his own band. The spirit or ghost of a dead shaman is known as *anúnsu* and is sharply distinguished from the ghosts of non-shamans (*ayánkadisu*). The *anúnsu* of other bands, however, are considered evil for they bring thunderstorms. When speaking about shamans and shaman spirits in Portuguese, the Nambicuara refer to both as "trovão" (thunder). This has led many observers to the conclusion that the Nambicuara believe in a thunder spirit. Among the Waklítisu, at least, "trovão" or thunder is nothing more than a shaman or a shaman spirit. Actual thunder, which is caused by a shaman spirit is called *tlídítu*. A shaman spirit may also enter the body of a jaguar (*yendru*), and cause harm to people.

821 The Nambicuara do not like heavy and prolonged rainstorms, for they say that the winds blow down their houses, the lightning sometimes kills people, and the rains wash away the tracks so that they and their dogs have difficulty in
756 following game. To pacify the evil *anúnsu*, who
789 has caused the storm, the shaman makes a cigar-shaped bundle (*yakúdendnsu*) out of certain dry leaves, which he ties with cotton twine, leaving long tails at each end. When he wants to stop the rain he lights one end of the bundle, and as it begins to smoke he waves it in the direction of the storm, telling the rain to go away. "Go away, go away, don't be angry at me," he says as he waves the bundle four times. If this does not stop the rain the shaman takes the sword club (*kalúnkisu*), which appears to have magical powers, and cuts the rain. If the rain still persists, he lights three smudges made by mixing "para toda" leaves with the *yakúndendnsu* leaves. When the smoke rises from the smudges he takes a burning brand and waves it against the storm telling it to stop.

756 The shamans of one band also practice sorcery
754 against individuals in another band by asking their *anúnsu* to inject objects into their bodies. When a shaman wishes to inject an object into his enemy he retires into a special hut (*sihdentsu*) and

756 by singing calls his *anúnsu*, who eventually comes
754 up out of the ground in front of him. The *anúnsu* may be in the form of a bird or a jaguar, but is very small in size. The shaman wears a hat made from a jaguar skin and a necklace made from jaguar claws and teeth. The shaman offers the hat and the necklace to his *anúnsu* if he will do his bidding. If the *anúnsu* is satisfied with the singing and the decorations he will carry out the shaman's orders. The procedure followed in curing
755 an individual who has been made ill by sorcery is much the same. The shaman calls his *anúnsu* by singing and asks that he help him draw out the object. The *anúnsu* enters the shaman, who then sucks out the dangerous object. In mild cases the shaman draws out bamboo slivers, but in cases of severe illness he draws out the bones of fish or the entrails of birds.

775 The ghosts of the dead (*aydnkadisu*) who live around the stone mountain from which the Nambicuara came, periodically come to the villages and camps asking for food. They are not dangerous if they are well-treated. When the shaman says that the *aydnkadisu* are around, the people prepare manioc cakes, roast ears of maize, and broil meat. They then gather around the shaman and sing together with the ghosts. The shaman thanks the ghosts for their singing and they finally go away. If the ghosts are dissatisfied with
[753] the offerings and the singing they become angry and make the children ill. To cure the children,
[755] a more elaborate feast has to be prepared for the ghosts.

775 In every case, contact with the ghosts of the
533 dead or with the spirits of dead shamans is made through singing. The Waklítisu do not use tobacco, drums, or rattles to communicate with the supernatural. One becomes a shaman when he hears the song of an *anúnsu*, which he later uses whenever he wishes to contact his spirit helper. Everyone in the band appears to know the songs
[834 which bring the *aydnkadisu*. Shamans practice
756] continence before important rites, for if the *anúnsu* observe sexual intercourse they become angry and take away all the cotton from the bushes.

757 In addition to treating illness through shamanistic practices, the Nambicuara resort to more practical methods. They brew herbs, the juice of which is later poured over the head or stomach of a

619 which cause sickness, they have given the magical herbs whose smoke blinds the dangerous *anúnsu*, and the techniques which will drive away the storms. Thus the shaman operating on a symbolic level continues the struggle for survival which has been defined for the Nambicuara by the nature of their adjustment to their physical environment and their relationships to one another.

THE LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

833 The Nambicuara recognize sexual intercourse (*winsúenditsu*) as the cause of pregnancy (*haldjítsu*). This act takes place in the woods while the husband and wife are out hunting or collecting, for it is considered improper to have sexual intercourse in public, even at night around the common camp fire. If a shaman should see a couple in sexual embrace while practicing his rites it would spoil his power. Although shamans use a special hut when calling their *anúnsu* there is always a chance that they may see a couple in the sexual act, so every effort must be made to avoid this danger. Shamans themselves abstain from sexual intercourse for 2 or 3 days before getting in contact with the spirits.

843 There appear to be no food taboos surrounding pregnancy among the Wakĺtisu. The husband continues hunting and collecting as usual, but he must avoid working too hard in the field for fear of causing his wife to abort. Women do not practice abortion, and the Nambicuara did not mention any medicines used for this purpose. Honey is considered conducive to sexual vigor and is used by young couples. Childless marriages are attributed to sterility in women, and a man may abandon his wife for this reason.

844 Birth takes place in the house, or in the camp if the family is out hunting. Just before expecting the birth of a child the expectant mother drinks the juice of certain herbs which are believed to facilitate birth. The husband and two older women assist in the delivery. The woman kneels on the ground and is supported by her husband. The umbilical cord is tied with a certain vine and then cut with a bamboo sliver. Among the Kitánrhu it is bitten off by one of the midwives. The placenta is buried at the place of birth and when the umbilical cord dries and falls off, it, too,

[p. 102 (B)]